

REMARKS

Claims 17-27 and 33-44 were previously pending in this application. In the aforementioned Office Action, claims 17-20, 23-27, 33-36 and 41-44 stood allowed, claims 38 and 40 were objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim but indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form, and claims 21, 22, 37 and 39 stood rejected.

Applicants do not agree with the rejections of claims 21, 22, 37 and 39, and reserve the right to file divisional and/or continuation applications directed to the subject matter of these claims. However, in order to secure allowance of a patent on the allowed claims, the rejected claims 21, 22, 37 and 39 have been cancelled, and claims 38 and 40 rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted, all claims now remaining in this application are allowable for the reasons stated in the Office Action.

Reconsideration and allowance of all claims in this application is respectfully requested.

This application now contains only 19 claims, including 4 independent claims, whereas applicants have previously paid fees for 32 claims, including 12 independent claims; see the Fee Sheet filed with this application on September 2, 2003. However, since the prescribed period for responding to the Office Action expired October 8, a Petition for a two month extension of this period is filed herewith.

Respectfully submitted
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